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THE

# Comical Adventures

OF THE LATE

# Mr. J. Spiller Comedian

AT

## EPSOM, in ENGLAND.

A TRUE HUMOROUS TALE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

## THE PLEASANT STORY

OF

## OBADIAH MOUSETRAP.

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True humour is a thing so hard,
It merits wisest men's regard;
And is so near ally'd to wit,
That many have mistook it for't
For tho' wit's e'er so entertaining,
'Tis best with humour for it's lining.

ANONYM.

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STIRLING:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY C. RANDALL.

*None so deaf as those who will not hear.*

A True humourous Tale, and Proverb exemplified in the following merry Story of Mr. JAMES SPILLER, Comedian of facetious Memory.

AS the art of true humour is very difficult to attain, and very rarely met with, I ſhall preſent my readers with the following quotation on that ſubject from the Spectator —' Among all kinds of writings, there are none in which authors are more apt to miſcarry than in works of humour, as there is none in which they are more ambitious to excel. It is not an imagination that teems with monſters; an head that is filled with extravagant conceptions, which is capable of filling the word with diverſions in this nature; and yet if we look into the productions of ſeveral writers, who ſet up for men of humour, what wild irregular fancies, what unnatural dif-

BRITISH MUSEUM
1.3.13.83

portions of thoughts do we meet with? If they ſpeak nonſenſe, they believe they are talking humour, and when they have drawn together a ſcheme of inconſiſtant ideas, they are not able to read it over to themſelves without laughing. Theſe poor gentlemen endeavour to gain themſelves the reputation of wits and humouriſts, by ſuch monſtrous conceptions as almoſt qualifies them for Bedlam: Not conſidering, that humour ſhould always be under the check of reaſon, and that it requires the direction of the niceſt judgment, by ſo much the more as it indulges itſelf in the moſt boundleſs freedoms. There is a kind of nature to be obſerved in this ſort of compoſition, as well as in all others, and a certain regularity of thought within, muſt diſcover the writer to be a man of ſenſe, at the ſame time that he appears altogether given up to caprice. For my part, when I read the delirious mirth of an unſkilful author, I cannot be ſo barbarous as to divert myſelf with it; but am rather apt to pity the man that laughs at any thing he writes.——It is indeed

much eaſier to deſcribe what is not humour, than what it is, and very difficult to define it any otherwiſe, than as Cowly has done wit—by negatives.' For a further definition of humour, and a beautiful compariſon between true humour and falſe humour, I would recommend my readers to the remaining part of the above ſpeculation, and ſhall proceed to my ſtory.

In the ſummer ſeaſon, Mr. Spiller was one day riding to Epſom, and in the evening met with an intimate acquaintance of his who was returning ſome three or four miles from that town, where (but I know not upon what occaſion, except the races) it was ſo prodigiouſly full of company, that he could not get accommodation for himſelf or his horſe upon any account. After ſome little ceremony had paſſed between them, the gentleman aſked Mr. Spiller where he was bound for? Who anſwered him, to Epſom.—What, ſays his friend, do you intend to ſtay there all night?—Yes Sir, replied Mr. Spiller, you may be ſure of that.—Why then, returned

the gentleman, if you do, you muſt take beds with you, both for yourſelf and horſe too, except you are there provided for already, or elſe you will find that you muſt do as I have done, that is to ſay, come back again; I have tryed every place in the town and there is not one bed to be got for love or money, as the ſaying is.

I'll lay a wager, replied Mr. Spiller, that I get a lodging both for myſelf and my horſe too, let the town be ever ſo full; and that too in one of the beſt Inns in the town,—Perhaps, ſaid the gentleman, you may have one already there beſpoke.——No indeed Sir, replied Mr. Spiller, I have not, I can aſſure you, nor am I acquainted with any perſon that lives in the town, to the beſt of my knowledge.—Why then, ſaid the gentleman, I'll lay you a gallon of claret, that you don't lie in the town to night, I mean in a bed; or get your horſe put into a ſtable there.—Done Sir, ſaid Mr. Spiller, I'll lay you a gallon of claret that I do: and that too, in one of the beſt inns in the town: And if you will favour

me with your company, and return back with me, you ſhall ſee yourſelf that I will.—No, no, replied the gentleman, I'll take your own word for it; and the firſt time we meet in London, if we have time, we'll have our wager, and a bird to make us merry over the hiſtory of this nights adventure;—with all my heart, replied Mr. Spiller: Which ſign do you reckon is the beſt, for that ſhall be the place I mean to lodge at?—After the gentleman had ſatisfied him in that point, they confirmed their wager, and ſo they parted.

When Mr. Spiller came to the inn where he was directed by his friend, he rides directly into the yard, and calling aloud for the hoſtler, he found it quite taken up with other gueſts, and every body in ſuch hurry and confuſion, that no creature offered to attend him, or ſee for any body that would.

With that he alights from his Roſinante, and leads him directly into a ſtable, which was before ſo full of horſes, that there was not room for

him possibly to lie down, but however, there he meets the hostler with whom he begins his humour, in the manner following. Here, friend, take care of this horse, and do you hear, let him be well rubb'd down.—Sir, answered the hostler, you see that the stables are already quite full; here is no room for him; nor have I any other place where there is more.—Well, well, said Spiller, you may do so then if you please, rub him down well and give him some hay now, and about half an hour hence, give him a quarter of corn and some beans. Sir, said the hostler again, I tell you, here is no room for him, nor will I take any charge of him.——Ay, do, do, replied Mr. Spiller, if thou thinkest so, put some bran amongst his corn with all my heart.——Sir, said the hostler, (roaring as loud as ever he could, imagining that he was deaf) I tell you that I'll not take any charge of your horse; and if you don't take him away with you, I'll turn him out of the stable, and let him go to the devil if he will.——Why, thou art an honest, sensible, good natur'd young fellow,

replied Mr. Spiller, and I'll leave it entirely to thee: But be ſure do not let my horſe be changed.—Curſe your deaf head! quoth the hoſtler; you may be d—'d, and your horſe too, I wiſh you were both in hell together. Here Mr. Spiller took not the leaſt notice of what the hoſtler had ſaid to him, but left the horſe with him in the ſtable, and goes himſelf directly into the houſe to get ſomething to drink.

And the hoſtler reflecting, that if the horſe ſhould be loſt, he might ſwear that he left him in his charge, and might by that means, come upon him for damages, he therefore tied him up to the manger, gave him ſome hay, and then ran into the houſe, to acquaint his miſtreſs (for ſhe was a widow) what a ſtrange and deaf odd ſort of a fellow ſhe had got to deal with. By this time, Mr. Spiller was come into the kitchen, and had juſt called for a pint of red wine, but the good hoſteſs being in a hurry, anſwered him, that ſhe was very ſorry that ſhe had no place to aſk him to ſit down

in. When he, not willing to underſtand her, replied,—'tis all one to me, madam, if your red wine is not good let me have a pint of white. Juſt as he had made this contrary anſwer, in comes the hoſtler, and as his miſtreſs was endeavouring to make Mr. Spiller underſtand what ſhe had to ſay to him, the hoſtler cried out to her,—Ay, d—n his deaf head, madam, you may ſpend as much of your breath as you pleaſe to talk to him, but he will never hear a word you ſay: I have been plagued with him this hour in the ſtable about his d—n'd horſe, and though I roared out in his deaf ears as loud as ever I could, till I had almoſt ſplit my throat, I could not make him underſtand me one word, and there's his horſe ſtill in the ſtable, I dare not turn him out, for fear he ſhould be loſt, and the deaf ſon of a b—h ſhould ſwear that I took charge of him.——Lord! cried the hoſteſs, I do not know how we ſhall get ſhut of him.——Troth, madam, anſwered the hoſtler, I fancy it will be beſt to let him alone, and give him nothing that he calls for to eat or drink, and perhaps

that may ſoon tire him of being here.

The hoſtler's advice was thought very good, and therefore reſolved on by his miſtreſs to be put in execution. So there ſtood poor Spiller, for ſome time, ſtaring about him, and could neither get a ſeat to ſit down, nor any thing to drink; but by and by, obſerving the ſervants to carry out of the kitchen a cover of ſmoking hot diſhes, he immediately follows them into a room, where there was about twenty gentlemen going to ſupper. So, as ſoon as he came into the room, he pulled off his hat, and after hanging it upon a peg, he ſtood there as mute as a fiſh. At length one of the gentlemen obſerving him, and alſo that he was a ſtranger, demanded.—What does this gentleman want?

But they all ſtared at him for ſome time, but no body claiming any knowledge of him, one of them ſaid to him, Sir, we are here a ſelect company, do you want any body, pray?———No ceremony with me, replied Mr. Spiller, I beg gentlemen, that you will not diſturb yourſelves upon my ac-

count, I can ſit any where ——D—n the fellow! ſays another of them, what does he mean? Turn him out of the room!——The ſervants being all buſy at his firſt coming into the room, placing the diſhes on the table, and putting things to right, had not obſerved his coming in before; but now hearing the gentlemen diſpute, they ſoon found the cauſe of it, and thereupon ſaid one of them,—Lord, gentlemen! you will get no ſatisfaction by ſwearing and quarreling with him; for he is ſo deaf, that you may fire a cannon at his ear, and he will not hear you. He has been in the kitchen this hour, but nobody can make him underſtand a word that any body ſays to him. They have been ready to knock out his brains ſeveral times, but he never underſtood them in the leaſt; he is a poor ſimple honeſt fellow; I dare ſay, but what has brought him here, the Lord knows; or how you will get him down again, the Lord knows. —Well, well cried one of them, what does it ſignify? 'Tis better to let him ſtay here, now he is here; he looks like an inoffenſive gentleman, and as

he is ſo deaf, we may be ſure that he will not be offended at any thing that is ſaid in company, nor ſhould we get any great honour in throwing him down ſtairs.

This ſpeech met with ſo general an approbation, that they all ſat down to ſupper, and let their deaf viſitant quietly partake with them, which we may ſay, was another point gained. So after they had ſupped and had ſat drinking wine and punch, and other liquors, for about the ſpace of an hour, Spiller got up, and with great ceremony thanked them all round for their very good company, and then throws down his ſhilling upon the table, for his ſhot. At which one of them roared out as loud as he could bellow.—— Z——ds, Sir! What do you mean by a ſhilling! A ſhilling will not do, nor two neither! Six ſhillings a head will hardly pay the reckoning.

Why now, gentlemen, reply'd Mr. Spiller, it does not ſignify making a multitude of words, for upon my ſoul I will be my ſhilling, if you were to

talk till to-morrow; therefore no apologies; gentlemen; I ſcorn to ſpunge upon any body.—Here after ſome ſtir, they found it was but in vain to talk with him, ſo they were forced to take the ſhilling, and be contented.

Some little time after, when Mr. Spiller was returned to the kitchen, as his eyes were rolling about, he eſpied one of the maids with a pan of coals in her hand (at which he inwardly rejoiced) ſo watching his opportunity, he ſlinks eaſily after her, quite unperceived by the girl; till when ſhe wss warming the bed he ſays to her,—— What, is this the room that I am to lie in?—At this unexpected demand, the poor girl, in the utmoſt ſurprize to ſee him there, replied to him, as loud as ſhe could roar,—No, Sir; this bed is for two gentlemen who are juſt coming into the room, and has been hired for them this month. Very well, my dear, ſaid Mr. Spiller, I like it very well, and I hope the ſheets are well aired; but where is my night-cap?——At Hell, quoth the girl, for ought I know, and I wiſh you were

there too! for I am ſure you are a worſe plague than the Devil: But, d—n your deaf head! I will have your neck broke down ſtairs preſently.

With that away ſhe flies, with the warming-pan in her hand, as faſt as ſhe could, to inform her miſtreſs and the two gentlemen, what befel her.—Madam, ſaid ſhe, yonder is that curſed dunny man, that has plagued the whole houſe ſo, has followed me ſlily up ſtairs in ſuch a room, where I was going to warm the bed for the two gentlemen, and I cannot for my life get him down again.

So away flies her Miſtreſs up ſtairs full drive, and the two gentlemen, who had beſpoke the room along with her. But when they came to the door, to their great diſappointment, they found it both locked and bolted; and he had alſo drawn a great cheſt of drawers againſt it, and placed a great wainſcot table againſt the drawers, and ſeveral chairs upon them: So that the gentlemen, at this baulk, were in a terrible paſſion, and ſtrove to burſt

the door open: But it being a thick oak door, and ſo ſtrongly ſtayed within, it was too much for them to accompliſh. So, after they had bounced againſt it half a dozen of times to no purpoſe, they ſtood to liſten whether they could learn what he was about; and Spiller at the ſame time rightly gueſſing what their ſudden ſilence was for, ſays to himſelf (but loud enough for them to hear him) the public Inns are ſometimes very dangerous places, and a man cannot be too ſecure in them; but tho' I have the misfortune to have loſt my hearing, I think they cannot eaſily make their way through that ſtrong door, and that heavy cheſt of drawers, and all the other things which I have put againſt them; and if they ſhould, they can want nothing but to rob and murder me, I am ſure.

When they all heard this, the hoſteſs gravely ſaid to the two gentlemen. —Gentleman! Do you hear this! I am glad you did not force open the door, with all my heart; for if you had, we might have been all ruined.

What could be done with ſuch a man? One of the gentlemen, being a practitioner of the law, anſwered the hoſteſs thus,—By G—d, madam, you are very much in the right of it; for although he has no right to the room he is in, yet, as this is a public Inn, and he being in poſſeſſion of it, to break open a door upon him, would be ſuch an aſſault, as I ſhould not care to be concerned in for an hundred pounds. This ſpeech of the lawyer's ſoon determined the matter, for down they all went very quitely, and left Mr. Spiller ſecure enough in his lodgings.

In the morning when Mr. Spiller came down, he very complaiſantly bid them all a good morrow, and they in return, all curſed him heartily for his good humour, and called him a thouſand bad names; but he underſtanding never a word that they ſaid, it was all given to the wind. Here, he deſired half a pint of white wine made hot, with an egg beat up in it for his breakfaſt, and then giving the hoſtler a ſhilling for looking after his horſe,

and a ſhilling to the maid for warming his bed, he mounted his nag. And being now ſettled in his ſaddle, he deſired the good hoſteſs to give him a glaſs of brandy, which ſhe did: And he drank to her very good health, rendering her his hearty thanks for her great civility. But while ſhe ſtood talking with him, for that little ſpace, having an occaſion to break wind, and not dreaming that he could be at all informed of the report, and recover his hearing ſo eaſily, ſhe never ſtood upon ceremony, but let fly at once, with the report of a demi-cannon. At this vociferatious ſalute, Spiller returned,—Well ſaid, madam, By heaven that was a rouzer, I hope madam you are better, I never heard a more banging f—t in my life.

G—d curſe you! cried the hoſteſs, is this you that was ſo deaf all night, and can hear a f—t in the morning? You ſcoundrel dog! you richly deſerve your brains knocked out.---Here her paſſion was ſo great, that ſhe could not contain herſelf; ſo while ſhe was looking about for ſomething to throw

at his head, he threw her down the ſixpence for his brandy, turned his horſe, and after repeating theſe words, —"None, madam, ſo deaf, as thoſe "who will not hear"—he rode out of the yard as faſt as he well could, leaving the whole houſe in the greateſt alarm imaginable.

And he fairly won his wager, and maintained himſelf undiſcovered to the very laſt.

## OBADIAH MOUSETRAP.

Quoth Hudibras, the cauſe is clear,—
As thou haſt proved by their practice,
No argument like matter of fact is;
And we are beſt of all led to
Men's principles by what they do.

HUD.

IT is moſt certain that men's actions ſpeak their principles the plaineſt, and it is not what we ſay, but what we do, that wiſe men judge by; and therefore the following ſtory may be a proper leſſon for the unwary to take

notice of. Ingratitude is certainly one of the worſt ſins that a man can be guilty of, and in a very ſpecial manner, when it is committed in a breach of truſt, under the perſon who gives them bread for life. If then, I ſay, ſuch a one ſhould be found betraying his maſter's truſt, and yielding up any right of his, for a ſordid and paultry bribe; if the perſon who had ſeduced him, ſhould then fight him with his own weapons, and trick him of his covenanted reward and unjuſt hire, as my reader will find was the caſe in the following ſtory: Such a perſon I ſay, if he ſhould break articles with him, and bilk him of his unjuſt and criminal expectations, is rather to be commended than the other pitied. There is no creature upon the face of the earth ſo guilty of this crime, ingratitude, as mankind. Even the moſt furious of wild beaſts, are civilized by gratitude, and will not hurt their benefactors and providers. But man is daily giving up his father, mother, wife, children, friend, nay, and his whole country, for a mere trifle. Let every man, thus

guilty, put the queſtion to himſelf, and then conſider it well, whether he thinks, (though he be called to no account for it in this life) the cries and groans of ſucceeding generations that lie under the oppreſſions and diſtreſs, which he before had cauſed, and brought upon them, will have no impreſſion upon his final JUDGE, that may move him to reward and puniſh his treaſons. That man who would ſell his truſt, I am perſuaded, would not boggle at any thing for gain; that is I mean, if he could conceive himſelf ſecure from the power of the law; and therefore, the following proceedings of our good friend Obadiah Mouſetrap, will in my opinion, be the eaſier juſtified, or at leaſt excuſed.

Our friend Obadiah Mouſetrap, who was a Quaker, and a commander of a trading veſſel, was juſt returned from a voyage, into the river of London, when he had a couple of cuſtom-houſe officers, as is uſual, immediately clapt on board him: But it happened, that two or three days after, the ſly old fox had a mind to ſound

the depth of thoſe worthy gentlemen's honeſty: whether with any view to ſerve his own intereſt, I ſhall leave my reader to judge of. So one day, as he was walking upon the deck with them, and talking of indifferent things, he ſays to one of them, (we'll ſuppoſe him whom he thought propereſt to begin with) friend, wilt thou go into my cabin, and drink a glaſs of rum? I have a caſk of that which is quite neat, if thou wilt come and taſte it, and give me thy opinion of it, I ſhall be obliged to thee. The officer complied, and they each of them drank a glaſs or two of it; and which the officer very much praiſed. The Quaker perceiving his ſpirits a little elevated, and believing him in a proper cue for his purpoſe, pulled out of his pocket a green purſe, with about ſixty guineas in it, ſays he, Friend, as far as I can perceive of thee, thou appeareſt to be a perſon of quick ſight and good underſtanding; therefore I ſhall have no occaſion to make a multitude of words, where I only wiſh to ſpeak, and ſtraight be underſtood. Thou ſeeſt this green purſe, and what it

contains; if thee, and thy brother officer will give me thy company for one half hour, only to drink a bowl of this rum, made into what they call punch, this purſe and all its contents ſhall be thine, as ſoon as the bowl is out; ſo conſider as thou thinkeſt proper. If thou ordereſt me to fill the bowl, I ſhall know what thou meaneſt, and will not only immediately obey thee, but will alſo fully make good my word. The officer here gave him a node of underſtanding, and immediately communicated this propoſal to his truſty companion; and after ſome private confabulation, they agreed to the captain's propoſal; and the former of theſe two, gave him as he had hinted, a ſignal for the bowl; which was compounded in a minute. As ſoon as this was ordered, the Quaker gave his inſtructions to his mate accordingly, and a boat was preſently hauled up cloſe a-ſtern, and was put off again for ſhore, before the bowl was near conſumed.

Now our honeſt friend, Obadiah Mouſetrap, being informed by his

mate, and thoroughly ſatisfied with what in this interval had been tranſacted, produced the green purſe, and delivered it to the perſon to whom he had promiſed: But, O dire diſappointment and confuſion! Behold the uncertainty of this world, inſtead of real gold, in honeſt weighty guineas, impoſtured braſs filled up their room, in flaſhy counters all. At ſight and proof of this, how did the invenomed tongues of the deceived begin to rave! Their eyes ſtruck fire, and their whole diſappointed frames began to ſhake with reſentment. But our good friend Obadiah Mouſetrap, being aſſiſted by the ſpirit ſoon found a way to cool their intemperate paſſions; I perceive, ſays he, my friends, that you have been deceived in me, as I have been in you, and have underſtood in earneſt, what I meant in jeſt; is it reaſonable to imagine, (I appeal to your own reflection) that I could be ſo weak as to give you a purſe of real gold for the good ſervices of drinking up my property? No, I think not, however, as you were both ſtrangers to me, I had a mind to make a trial of your

honeſty. I know that you would think I had ſome illicit buſineſs to tranſact, worthy of giving ſuch a preſent, for an opportunity to do it in; but ye are both miſtaken, I never wronged my king nor my couutry in my life, I look upon you both as perſons that hath infamouſly forfeited the truſt repoſed in you, and are liable of being ſeverely puniſhed for it; which, if I was to be as cruel to you (by informing againſt you) as you have been to me, by ſuſpecting that I would wrong the King of his due, that muſt unavoidably be the caſe; but I ſcorn ſuch an action, though I deſpiſe your principles.——However, my friends I would admoniſh you to be more honeſt, and more upon your guard for the future, which will effectually compleat my good intention by this experiment.

FINIS.